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AUGUST 21 1961
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FROM: BONN
TO: Secretary of State
NO: 387, AUGUST 21, 6 PM

ACTION DEPARTMENT 387, INFORMATION BERLIN 126, LONDON 91,
PARIS 110.

DURING PAST CRUCIAL WEEK, REACTIONS OF LEADING WEST GERMAN POLITICIANS TO BERLIN DEVELOPMENTS HAVE FOLLOWED EXPECTED LINES. POLITICAL FIGURES VOICED THEIR WRATH AND INDIGNATION AT COMMUNIST ACTIONS SEALING ESCAPE ROUTE FROM EAST GERMANY VIA BERLIN AND RENEWED THEIR EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR PRESERVATION OF WEST BERLIN AND GERMAN REUNIFICATION. THEY FAILED, HOWEVER, CONSPICUOUSLY, AS WEEK WORE ON, TO ADVOCATE STRONG COUNTERMEASURES, AND THUS FAILED TO FOLLOW THE LEAD OF SOME WEST GERMAN NEWSPAPERS WHICH INITIALLY CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE AND DRASIC WESTERN ACTION AND CRITICIZED ALLEGED WESTERN INACTION TO ULRICH'S FAIT ACCOMPLI. GERMAN ATTITUDE WITHIN ALL POLITICAL PARTIES, EXCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM BERLIN, IS ONE OF RESTRAINT DESPITE STRONG WORDS BY INDIVIDUALS.

VICE PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S DRAMATIC VISIT TO BERLIN HAS RECEIVED UNIVERSAL APPLAUSE AS HAS MOVEMENT OF U.S. BATTLE GROUP THERE TO REINFORCE THE GARRISON. CERTAIN NOTE OF RELIEF THAT SITUATION HAS NOT GOTTEN OUT OF HAND APPEARS DETECTABLE AND GOVERNMENT MAY WELL FEEL THAT HEAT HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM IT AS RESULT OF THIS TREMENDOUS DISPLAY OF U.S. SOLIDARITY AND CONCERN FOR FREEDOM OF BERLIN. AT SAME TIME, IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT CRISIS OF MORALE AND CONFIDENCE OF WEST BERLIN WAS REFLECTED TO SAME DEGREE IN FEDREP.

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-2- 387, AUGUST 21, 6 PM FROM BONN

SEEN FROM DOMESTIC INTERNAL POLITICAL VIEWPOINT, CHANCELLOR AND CDU LEADERS PROBABLY FEEL CERTAIN AMOUNT OF IRRITATION OVER FACT THAT BRANDT HAS STOLEN THE HEADLINES IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, ESPECIALLY DURING THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO BERLIN. BRANDT'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT KENNEDY VISIBLY IRRITATED CDU LEADERS. PRESS HAS WIDELY REPORTED CHANCELLOR WISHED TO ACCOMPANY VICE PRESIDENT TO BERLIN, BUT DID NOT DO SO BECAUSE SUCH MOVE MIGHT HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED AS U.S. INTERFERENCE IN DOMESTIC ELECTION CAMPAIGN. WHILE THE IRRITATION NOTED ABOVE EXISTS, EMB DOUBTS THAT IT BASED ON ANY LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN CDU RANKS ABOUT OUTCOME OF ELECTION. IRRITATION IS MORE LIKELY DUE TO FACT THAT CHANCELLOR REACTS ADVERSELY TO ANY EVENT WHICH DISTRACTS VOTERS FROM CONCENTRATION UPON MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN HIS VIEW, I.E. CHOICE BETWEEN TIME-TESTED CDU POLICIES UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP WHICH HAVE BROUGHT SECURITY AND PROSPERITY TO FEDREP AND THOSE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION WHICH HAS ONLY RECENTLY SOUGHT TO EMULATE CDU'S POLICIES.

CHANCELLOR INDEED CONTINUES TO CAST DOUBT UPON SPD'S UNDERSTANDING OF NECESSITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS. CHANCELLOR HAS LITTLE INSTINCT FOR OVER-CONFIDENCE IN DOMESTIC POLITICAL TESTS OF STRENGTH AND PROBABLY DISLIKES THOUGHT THAT OPPONENT MIGHT GAIN VOTES THROUGH EXPLOITATION OF BERLIN CRISIS. SO FAR AS WE KNOW, AND DESPITE IDEAS OF OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS, MENDE, FOR EXAMPLE, HE FAVORS HOLDING ELECTIONS AS SCHEDULED AND CONTINUATION ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN IN ITS PRESENT FORM. WHILE MANY WEST GERMAN VOTERS UNDOUBTEDLY FEEL BOTH INCREASED SYMPATHY AND RESPECT FOR BRANDT AS VIGOROUS MAYOR OF EMBATTLED BERLIN, THEY PROBABLY DO NOT EQUATE THIS FEELING FOR A VOTE FOR SPD. CHANCELLOR'S CALL FOR CALM, CLOSE COOPERATION OF ALLIES AND EVENTUAL NEGOTIATION WITH SOVIETS SEEMS CLOSELY ATTUNED TO WEST GERMAN PUBLIC MOOD DESPITE EMOTIONS OF THE MOMENT.

REAL IMPACT

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REAL IMPACT OF RECENT EVENTS MAY ONLY COME AFTER ELECTIONS WHEN UPON REFLECTION PEOPLE OF FEDREP MAY THINK ABOUT REALITIES OF REUNIFICATION AND EASTERN FRONTIER AS MANIFESTED BY PHYSICAL DIVISION OF GERMANY AND SEPARATION OF EAST BERLIN FROM WEST. SOME POLITICIANS THEN MAY TRY TO CAPITALIZE ON APPARENT FAILURE OF LONGSTANDING CDU CLAIM THAT FIRM ALLIANCE WITH WEST WOULD INEVITABLY LEAD TO REUNIFICATION. FULLER ASSESSMENT IMPACT OF BERLIN CRISIS UPON WEST GERMAN POLITICAL SCENE FOLLOWS BY DESPATCH.

DOWLING

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